

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01519 231820Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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P R 231538Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME
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PAGE 02 THE HA 01519 231820Z

SUBJECT: CABINET CRISIS: NOW WHAT?

REF: THE HAGUE 1492

1. FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF SIX CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MINISTERS
AND THE HANDING OVER OF PORTFOLIOS BY THE TEN PROGRESSIVE
MINISTERS YESTERDAY, QUEEN JULIANA ASKED PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL

AND HIS CABINET TO CONTINUE EXERCISING THEIR FUNCTIONS WHILE SHE CONSIDERED THE SITUATION. QUEEN IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN CONSULTATIONS TODAY WITH CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISORS AND POLITICAL LEADERS. AN EARLY DECISION IS NEEDED TO RESOLVE THE MANY UNCERTAINTIES CAUSED BY THE FALL OF THE CABINET TWO MONTHS BEFORE ELECTIONS.

2. OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO REALISTIC CHOICES AVAILABLE FOR THE QUEEN: (A) TO ASK ALL CURRENT MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE AS A "DEMISSIONAIRE" CABINET, OR (B) TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS OF THE CDA MINISTERS AND TO GIVE BACK TO THE PROGRESSIVES THEIR PORTFOLIOS FOR CONTINUATION AS A RUMP CABINET. UNDER THE DUTCH SYSTEM, A "DEMISSIONAIRE" OR CARETAKER CABINET (THE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT THE CABINET FINDS ITSELF IN TODAY) OPERATES UNDER LIMITED POWERS, PARTICULARLY IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. IT SHOULD NOT INITIATE NEW LEGISLATION NOR TAKE MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS. INTERNATIONALLY, HOWEVER, SOURCES IN GOVERNMENT AND THE PARLIAMENT BELIEVE IT COULD OPERATE MORE OR LESS ON A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL BASIS. A RUMP CABINET WOULD HAVE FULL POWERS, BUT POLITICAL REALITIES WOULD LIKELY TEMPER ACTIVITIES OF DEN UYL AND HIS PROGRESSIVE COLLEAGUES.

3. QUEEN WILL BE CONSULTING WITH VICE PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF STATE, CHAIRMAN OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND LEADERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE LOWER HOUSE. SHE MIGHT ALSO WANT TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH DEN UYL AND WITH JUSTICE MINISTER AND CDA LEADER VAN AGT, THE INDIVIDUAL CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE HEARD THAT BOTH LABOR AND THE CDA HOPE THE QUEEN WILL DECIDE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 THE HA 01519 231820Z

HAVE THEM CONTINUE TOGETHER IN CARETAKER STATUS, A POSITION THAT DEN UYL REPORTEDLY SET OUT IN HIS MEETING WITH HER YESTERDAY IN THE HAGUE. AT PAKISTANI RECEPTION TODAY, FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL CONFIRMED LABOR PREFERENCE AND PREDICTED THIS OUTCOME. WE SAW NO INDICATION DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, WHICH RAN UNTIL LATE NIGHT MARCH 22, THAT POLITICIANS IN THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES WANTED TO SEE THE ALREADY MAJOR SPLIT BETWEEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND PROGRESSIVES WIDEN MORE, AS IT COULD WITH THE FORMATION OF A RUMP CABINET EXCLUDING THE CDA.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE QUESTION ABOUT WHAT FORM THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE FOR THE REMAINING TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE MAY 25 ELECTIONS, ONE HAS UNEXPECTEDLY ARISEN REGARDING THE PARLIAMENT. IT LOOKS AS IF DECISION MAY BE TAKEN NOW TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT THE DAY BEFORE ELECTIONS, OPENING WAY FOR NEW PARLIAMENT TO BE SEATED IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS. A DECISION FOR EARLY DISSOLUTION SHOULD HAVE NO MAJOR IMPACT SINCE PARLIAMENT WAS SCHEDULED TO

GO INTO RECESS ANYWAY FOR ELECTIONS IN LATE APRIL.

5. QUICK SOUNDINGS THAT WE HAVE TAKEN IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY INDICATE THAT THE CURRENT CABINET CRISIS SHOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON FOREIGN POLICY. OFFICIALS IN THE NATO SECTION DO NOT RPT NOT THINK THAT THE GON WILL HAVE TO RESERVE ITS POSITION ON AWACS DURING THE MARCH 25 DPC MINISTERIAL. THERE IS SOME QUESTION, HOWEVER, WHETHER MINISTER OF DEFENSE STEMERDINK WILL FEEL FREE TO ATTEND PERSONALLY. SUBJECT WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH HIM MARCH 24. ASKED ABOUT F-16 LETTER OF AGREEMENT POSSIBILITIES, MFA OFFICIALS SAID HE "COULD NOT IMAGINE" THAT CABINET CRISIS WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT. F-16 FALLS INTO THE CATEGORY OF NORMAL BUSINESS, HE SAID. DEN UYL TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL STILL PLAN TO ATTEND EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING IN ROME MARCH 25, AND LATTER TOLD POLCOUNS THAT, WITH UNANIMOUS PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT BEHIND THEM (THE HAGUE 1426), HE AND DEN UYL WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO PUT DUTCH CASE ON EC PARTICIPATION AT SUMMIT AS HARD AS EVER.
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PAGE 04 THE HA 01519 231820Z

6. ALMELO ULTRA-CENTRIFUGE ENLARGEMENT WILL MOST LIKELY BE DELAYED (SEPTEL).
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